

CASE STUDY

Vietnamese Catholic Community In South Australia

From humble beginnings in the late 1970s, The Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia Inc. (VCC) has been thriving in Adelaide for four-plus decades.

As the Community grew over the first 15 years, it had to move to different locations around Adelaide as a result of the growing needs of its members. With a concerted and sustained effort, the hopes and dreams of the Vietnamese Catholics in South Australia were realised when in the late 1990s, a block of land in the suburb of Pooraka was purchased and on it a community hall was built.

In 2014, construction commenced on a multi-purpose hall adjacent to the community hall on this property. Its purpose was to enable the Community to continue to function while the community hall was being renovated into a proper church, which after much anticipation was opened on September 29th 2019. The church is truly spectacular, seating around 1200 people on its freshly-stained timber pews. Placed along the perimeter are lit-glass sculptures of biblical scenes. Choirs form an important part of a mass and a dedicated mezzanine was built at the rear of the sanctuary to seat them.

SOUND ADVICE

The criteria in sourcing the right PA system was threefold: deliver crystal clear audio at every seat, don't mess with the aesthetics of the interior of the church, and keep it affordable. The challenge fell to Adelaide-based integrators Leedall – Future Thinking.

The width and breadth of the church made an ideal canvas for a line array PA system but given the strict orders to not impinge on the altar's aesthetics, this was not to be. Thus Jason Skene and Nigel Saywell from Leedall investigated

five different column array options with the dealbreaker being whether it would cover the entire space without breaking a sweat. As one VCC operator put it: "We wanted a system that would sound louder than it looks."

The Bose MSA12X Panaray product won out against the contenders. Its superior sound quality was a major decider but it's also highly configurable when run with the Bose ControlSpace EX-1280C DSP. This allowed Leedall's system design team to beam steer the sound exactly where it was needed (and away from highly reverberant ceiling areas) and thus meet the coverage and speech intelligibility requirements of the client's brief.

A VCC representative added, "The Bose Panaray steerable column speakers are a great addition because they fit discreetly to the side of each of the columns on the sanctuary but allows sound to be directed to the hard to reach areas of the congregation."

The FOH system is comprised of three stacked Bose Panaray MSA12X column loudspeakers linked as a single array and mounted on each pillar either side the altar. Tucked just behind these is another MSA12X to fire sound underneath the bulkheads to the far sides of the sanctuary. Two Bose 502s mounted to the rear of the columns act as in-fills, directing sound toward the Monsignor's position on the stage. Slightly further out from the altar sits four Bose subwoofers stacked in a custom-built wooden cabinet for seamless visual integration. Two delayed Bose F1 812 loudspeakers are hung from the ceiling above the mezzanine to provide the choir with time-aligned direct sound.

Additionally, four Bose Panaray 302 surface-mount environmental



loudspeakers provide audio reinforcement around the outdoor perimeter of the church.

INPUTS

All inputs enter a Dante network which feed into the ControlSpace EX-1280C processor. Video distribution and control is provided by Crestron systems. Most masses only need a quick recall of a preset before the entire system is ready to roll. A grid of supercardioid condenser microphones hang neatly from the mezzanine ceiling above the choir.

The same goes for the lapel mic worn by the Monsignor, with another Shure lapel and two wireless handhelds also available. The majority of spoken word content is through the two lectern-mounted gooseneck mics to the right of the altar. Nigel notes the most forward of the two is in a nightmarish position for feedback – virtually directly in front of the right MSA12X columns – yet feedback is negated using adaptive feedback suppression, two-stage gating and ducking via the ControlSpace EX-1280C.

THE RESULT

For the Vietnamese Catholic Community in South Australia, having a PA system custom-designed to sonically fit the beautiful new church like a glove is the ultimate result. The tailored coverage of the slim MSA12X loudspeakers paired

with the powerful DSP capability of the EX-1280C has created a system that's visually understated yet sonically impactful. The result is very clean sounding spoken word which carries authoritatively and evenly from the front to back of the sanctuary.

"The really pleasing thing," says a VCC representative, "is that everyone from the front right to the back corners can hear quite clearly. When the system is correctly configured and tuned, it can transform the entire Church and lift the spirit of the whole congregation to another level. This was demonstrated at the dedication of the new Church with a packed congregation of more than 1200 worshippers."

"We're very happy with what we've delivered," reflects Jason Skene. "The fact that we could achieve full coverage without a centre array was key to us choosing the Bose solution. And obviously the flexibility of the EX-1280C DSP gave us a lot of confidence that we could manage the solution around a single platform."

